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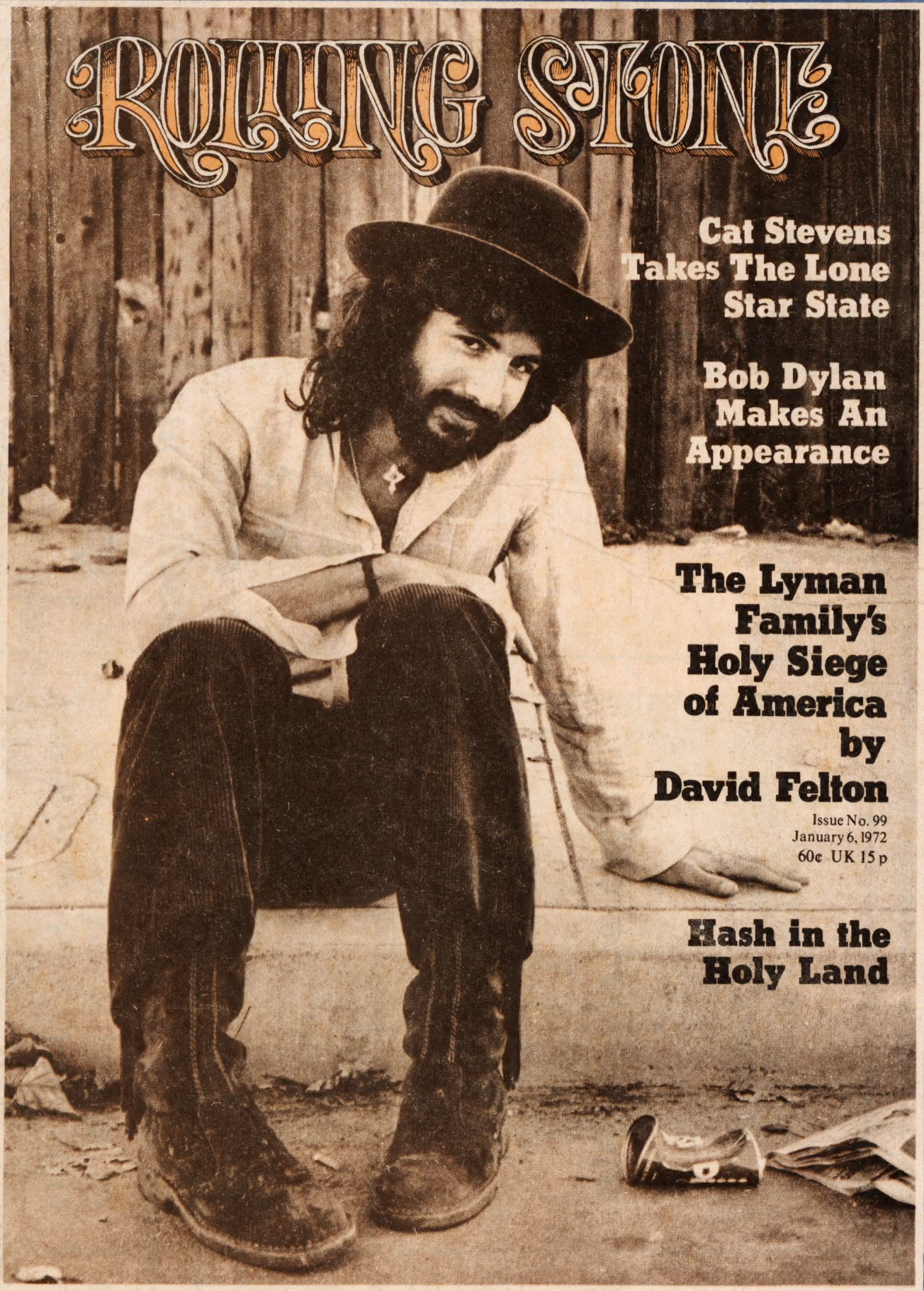

ROLLING STONE

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Hash in the Holy Land

Annie Leibovitz

FEAR & LOATHING IN WASHINGTON

BY HUNTER S. THOMPSON

Is This Trip Necessary?

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Outside my new front door the street is full of leaves. My lawn slopes down to the sidewalk; the grass is still green, but the life is going out of it. Red berries wither on the tree beside my white colonial stoop. In the driveway my Volvo with blue leather seats and Colorado plates sits facing the brick garage. And right next to the car is a cord of new firewood: Pine, elm and cherry. I burn a vicious amount of firewood these days . . . even more than the Alsop brothers.

When a man gives up drugs he wants big fires in his life — all night long, every night, huge flames in the fireplace & the volume turned all the way up. I have ordered more speakers to go with my new McIntosh amp — and also a 50 watt "boombox" for the FM car radio.

You want good strong seatbelts with the boombox, they say, because otherwise the bass riffs will bounce you around inside like a goddamn pingpong ball . . . a very bad act in traffic; especially along these elegant boulevards of Our Nation's Capital.

* * *

One of the best and most beneficial things about coming East now and then is that it tends to provoke a powerful understanding of the "Westward Movement" in US history. After a few years on the Coast or even Colorado you tend to forget just exactly what it was that put you on the road, going west, in the first place. You live in L.A. a while and before long you start cursing traffic jams on the freeways in the warm Pacific dusk . . . and you tend to forget that in New York City you can't even *park;* forget about driving.

Even in Washington, which is still a relatively loose and open city in terms of traffic, it costs me about $1.50 an hour every time I park downtown . . . which is nasty: but the shock is not so much the money-cost as the rude understanding that it is no longer considered either sane or natural to *park* on the city streets. If you happen to find a spot beside an open parking meter you don't dare use it, because the odds are better than even that somebody will come along and either steal your car or reduce it to twisted rubble because you haven't left the keys in it.

There is nothing unusual, they tell me about coming back to your car and finding the radio aerial torn off, the windshield wipers bent up in the air like spaghetti and all the windows smashed . . . for no particular reason except to make sure you know just exactly where it's at these days.

Where indeed?

* * *

At 5:30 in the morning I can walk outside to piss casually off my stoop and watch the lawn dying slowly from a white glaze of frost . . . Nothing moving out here tonight; not since that evil nigger hurled a three-pound Washington Post through the shattered glass coachlight at the top of my stone front steps. He offered to pay for it, but my Dobermans were already on him.

Life runs fast & mean in this town. It's like living in an armed camp, a condition of constant fear. Washington is about 72 percent black; the shrinking white population has backed itself into an elegant-looking ghetto in the Northwest quadrant of town — which seems to have made things a lot easier for the black marauders who have turned places like chic Georgetown and once-stylish Capitol Hill into hellishly paranoid Fear Zones.

'It's a Goddamned Jungle!'

Washington Post columnist Nicholas Von Hoffman recently pointed out that the Nixon-Mitchell administration — seemingly obsessed with restoring Law and Order in the land, at almost any cost — seems totally unconcerned that Washington, D.C. has become the "Rape Capital of the World."

One of the most dangerous areas in town is the once-fashionable district known as Capitol Hill. This is the section immediately surrounding the Senate/Congress office buildings, a very convenient place to live for the thousands of young clerks, aides and secretaries who work up there at the pinnacle. The peaceful, tree-shaded streets on Capitol Hill look anything but menacing: brick colonial townhouses with cut glass doors and tall windows looking out on the Library of Congress and the Washington monument . . . When I came here to look for a house or apartment, about a month ago, I checked around town and figured Capitol Hill was the logical place to locate.

"Good *God,* man!" said my friend from the liberal New York Post. "You can't live *there!* It's a goddamn jungle!"

Crime figures for "The District" are so heinous that they embarrass even J. Edgar Hoover. Rape is up 80 percent this year over 1970, and a recent rash of murders (averaging about one every day) has mashed the morale of the local police to a new low. Of the 250 murders this year, only 36 have been solved . . . and the Washington Post says the cops are about to give up.

Meanwhile, things like burglaries, street muggings and random assaults are so common that they are no longer considered news. The Washington Evening Star, one of the city's three dailies, is located in the Southeast District — a few blocks from the Capitol — in a windowless building that looks like the vault at Fort Knox. Getting into the Star, to see somebody, is almost as difficult as getting into the White House. Visitors are scrutinized by hired cops and ordered to fill out forms that double as "hall passes." So many Star reporters have been mugged, raped and menaced that they come & go in fast taxis, like people running the gauntlet — fearful, with good reason, of every sudden footfall between the street and the bright-lit safety of the newsroom guard station.

This kind of attitude is hard for a stranger to cope with. For the past few years I have lived in a place where I never even bothered to take the keys out of my car, much less try to lock up the house. Locks were more a symbol than a reality, and if things ever got serious there was always the .44 magnum. But in Washington you get the impression — if you believe what you hear from even the most "liberal" insiders — that just about everybody you see on the street is holding at least a .38 Special, and maybe worse.

Not that it matters a hell of a lot at ten feet . . . but it makes you a trifle nervous to hear that nobody in his or her right mind would dare to walk alone from the Capitol Building to a car in the parking lot without fear of later on having to crawl, naked and bleeding, to the nearest police station.

All this sounds incredible — and that was *my* reaction at first: "Come on! It can't be that *bad!*"

"You wait and see," they said. "And meanwhile, keep your doors locked." I immediately called Colorado and had another Doberman shipped in. If this is what's happening in this town, I felt, the thing to do was get right on top of it . . . but paranoia gets very heavy when there's no more humor in it; and it occurs to me now that maybe this is what has happened to whatever remains of the "liberal power structure" in Washington. Getting beaten in Congress is one thing — even if you get beaten *a lot* — but when you slink out of the Senate chamber with your tail between your legs and *then* have to worry about getting mugged, stomped or raped in the Capitol parking lot by a trio of renegade Black Panthers . . . well, it tends to bring you down a bit, and warp your Liberal Instincts.

There is no way to avoid "racist undertones" here. The simple heavy truth is that Washington is mainly a Black City, and that most of the violent crime is therefore committed by blacks—not always against whites, but often enough to make the relatively wealthy white population very nervous about random social contacts with their black fellow citizens. After only ten days in this town I have noticed the Fear/Syndrome clouding even my own mind: I find myself ignoring black hitch-hikers, and every time I do it I wonder, "Why the fuck did you do that?" And I tell myself, "Well, I'll pick up the next one I see." And sometimes I do, but not always . . .

* * *

My arrival in town was not mentioned by any of the society columnists. It was shortly after dawn, as I recall, when I straggled into Washington just ahead of the rush-hour, government-worker carpool traffic boiling up from the Maryland suburbs . . . humping along in the slow lane on US Interstate 70S like a crippled steel piss-ant; dragging a massive orange U-haul trailer full of books and "important" papers . . . feeling painfully slow & helpless because the Volvo was never made for this kind of work.

It's a quick little beast and one of the best ever built for rough-road, mud & snow driving . . . but not even this new, six-cylinder "super-Volvo" is up to hauling 2000 pounds of heavy swill across the country from Woody Creek, Colorado to Washington, D.C. The odometer read 2155 when I crossed the Maryland line as the sun came up over Hagerstown . . . still confused after getting lost in a hamlet called Breezewood in Pennsylvania; I'd stopped there to ponder the drug question with two freaks I met on the Turnpike.

The White Gorilla Incident

They had blown a tire east of Everett, but nobody would stop to lend them a jack. They had a spare tire — and a jack, too, for that matter — but no jack-*handle;* no way to crank the car up and put the spare on. They had gone out to Cleveland, from Baltimore, — to take advantage of the brutally depressed used-car market in the vast urban web around Detroit . . . and they'd picked up this '66 Ford Fairlane for $150.

I was impressed.

"Shit," they said. "You can pick up a goddamn *new Thunderbird* out there for seven-fifty. All you need is *cash,* man; people are desperate! There's *no work* out there, man; they're selling everything! It's down to a dime on the dollar. Shit, I can sell any car I can get my hands on around Detroit for *twice* the money in Baltimore."

I said I would talk to some people with capital and maybe get into that business, if things were as good as they said. They assured me that I could make a natural fortune if I could drum up enough cash to set up a steady shuttle between the Detroit-Toledo-Cleveland area and places like Baltimore, Philly and Washington. "All you need," they said, "is some dollars in front and some guys to drive the cars."

"Right," I said. "And some jack-handles."

"What?"

"Jack-handles — for scenes like these."

They laughed. Yeah, a jack-handle or so might save a lot of trouble. They'd been waving frantically at traffic for about three hours before I came by . . . and in truth I only stopped because I couldn't quite believe what I thought I'd just seen. Here I was all alone on the Pennsylvania Turnpike on a fast downhill grade — running easily, for a change — when suddenly out of the darkness in a corner of my right eye I glimpsed what appeared to be a white gorilla running towards the road.

I hit the brakes and pulled over. What the fuck was *that?* I had noticed a disabled car as I crested the hill, but the turnpikes & freeways are full of abandoned junkers these days . . . and you don't really notice them, in your brain, until you start to zoom past one and suddenly have to swerve left to avoid killing a big furry/white animal, lunging into the road on its hind legs.

A white bear? *Agnew's other son?*

At this time of the morning I was bored from bad noise on the radio and half-drunk from doing off a quart of Wild Turkey between Chicago and the Altoona exit so I figured, Why Not? Check it out.

But I was moving along about 70 at the time and I forgot about the trailer . . . so by the time I got my whole act stopped I was 500 yards down the turnpike and I couldn't back up.

But I was still curious. So I set the blinker lights flashing on the Volvo and started walking back up the road, in pitch darkness, with a big flashlight in one hand and a .357 magnum in the other. No point getting stomped & fucked over, I thought — by wild beasts or anything else. My instincts were purely humanitarian — but what about that Thing I was going back to look for? You read about these people in the Reader's Digest: Blood-crazy dope fiends who crouch beside the highway and prey on innocent travelers.

Maybe Manson, or the ghost of Charley Starkweather. You never know . . . and that warning works both ways. But these were two poor freaks, broke

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& hopelessly stoned, shot down beside the highway for lack of nothing more than failure to possess a 91-cent jack-handle . . . and now, after three hours of trying to flag down a helping hand, they finally catch the attention of a drunken lunatic who rolls a good quarter-mile or so before stopping and then creeps back toward them in the darkness with a .357 magnum in his hand.

A vision like this is enough to make a man wonder about the wisdom of calling for help. For all they knew I was half-mad on PCP and eager to fill my empty canteen with enough fresh blood to make the last leg of the trip into Washington and apply for White House press credentials . . . nothing like an accidental big hit of red corpuscles to give a man the right lift for a rush into politics.

Lester, Jerry & the Trucker

But this time things worked out — as they usually do when you go with your instincts — and when I finally got back to the de-railed junker I found these two half-frozen heads with a blow-out . . . and the "white bear" rushing into the road had been nothing more than Jerry, wrapped up in a furry white blanket from a Goodwill Store in Baltimore, finally getting so desperate that he decided to do anything necessary to make somebody stop. At least a hundred cars & trucks had zipped past, he said: "I *know* they could see me, because most of them swerved out into the passing lane — even a Cop Car; this is the first time in my goddamn life that I really wanted a cop to stop for me . . . shit, they're supposed to *help* people, right? . . ."

Lester, his friend, was too twisted to even get out of the car until we started cranking it up. The Volvo jack wouldn't work, but I had a huge screwdriver that we managed to use as a jack-handle.

When Lester finally got out he didn't say much; but finally his head seemed to clear and he helped put the tire on. Then he looked up at me while Jerry tightened the bolts and said: "Say, man, you have anything to smoke?"

"Smoke?" I said. "Do I look like the kind of person who'd be carrying marry-wanna?"

Lester eyed me for a moment, then shook his head. "Well, shit," he said. "Let's smoke some of ours."

"Not here," I said. "Let's get some coffee down in Breezeburg; there's bound to be a truckstop."

Jerry nodded. "It's cold as a bastard out here. If we want to get loaded, let's go someplace where it's warm."

They gave me a ride down to the Volvo, then followed me into Breezeburg to a giant truck-stop.

"This is *terrible* shit," Lester muttered. "There's *nothin'* worth a damn for sale these days, It's got so the only thing you can get off on is smack."

Jerry nodded. The waitress appeared with more coffee. "You boys are sure laughin' a lot," she said. "What's so *funny* at this hour of the morning?"

Lester fixed her with a front-toothless smile and two glittering eyes that might have seemed dangerous if he hadn't been in such a mellow mood. "You know," he said, "I used to be a male whore, and I'm laughin' because I'm so happy that I finally found Jesus."

The waitress smiled nervously as she filled our cups and then hurried back to her perch behind the counter. We drank off the coffee and traded a few more stories about the horrors of the latter-day drug market. Then Jerry said they would have to get moving. "We're heading for Baltimore," he said. "What about you?"

"Washington," I said.

"What for?" Lester asked. "Why the fuck would anybody want to go *there?*"

I shrugged. We were standing in the parking lot while my Doberman pissed on the wheel of a big Hard Brothers poultry truck. "Well . . . it's a weird sort of trip," I said finally. "What happened is that I finally got a job, after 12 years."

"Jesus!" said Lester. "That's heavy. Twelve years on the dole! Man, you must of been really strung out!"

I smiled. "Yeah . . . yeah, you could probably say that."

"What *kind* of a job?" Jerry asked.

Now the Doberman had the driver of the Hard Brothers truck backed up against his cab, screeching hysterically at the dog and kicking out with his metal-toed Army boots. We watched with vague amusement as the Doberman —puzzled by this crazy outburst—backed off and growled a warning.

"O God Jesus," screamed the trucker. "Somebody help me!" It was clear that he felt he was about to be chewed up and killed, for no reason at all, by some vicious animal that had come out of the darkness to pin him against his own truck.

"OK, Benjy!" I shouted. "Don't fool with that man — he's nervous." The trucker shook his fist at me and yelled something about getting my license number.

"Get out of here, you asshole!" Lester screamed. "It's pigs like you that give Dobermans a bad name."

A Revolutionary Drug Brothers Grip

Jerry laughed as the trucker drove off. "You won't last long on the job with a dog like that," he said. "Seriously — what kind of work do you do?"

"It's a political gig," I said. "I'm going to Washington to cover the '72 presidential campaign for ROLLING STONE."

"Jesus Christ!" Jerry muttered. "That's weird! The Stone is into politics?"

I stared down at the asphalt, not sure of what to say. Was "The Stone" into politics? Or was it just *me?* I had never really wondered about it . . . but suddenly on the outskirts of Washington, in the cold grey dawn of this truck-stop near Breezetown just north of the Maryland line, it suddenly occurred to me that I couldn't really say what I *was* doing there — except heading for D.C. with an orange pig-shaped trailer and a Doberman Pinscher with bad nerves after too many days on the road.

"It sounds like a stinking goddamn way to get back into work," said Lester. "Why don't you hang up that bullshit and we'll put something together with that car-shuttle Jerry told you about?"

I shook my head. "No, I want to at least try this trip," I said.

Lester stared at me for a moment, then shrugged. "God damn!" he said. "What a bummer. Why would *anybody* want to get hung up in a pile of shit like Politics?"

"Well . . . . . ." I said, wondering if there was any sane answer to a question like that: "It's mainly a personal trip, a very hard thing to explain."

Jerry smiled. "You talk like you've *tried* it," he said. "Like maybe you *got off on it.*"

"Not as far as I meant to," I said, "but definitely high."

Lester was watching me now with new interest. "I always *thought* that about politicians," he said. "Just a gang of goddamn power junkies, gone off on their own strange trips."

"Come on, now," said Jerry. "Some of those guys are OK."

"Who?" Lester asked.

"That's why I'm going to Washington," I said. "To check out the people and find out if they're *all* swine."

"Don't worry," said Lester. "They are. You might as well go looking for cherries in a Baltimore whorehouse."

"OK," I said. "I'll see you when I make it over to Baltimore." I stuck out my hand and Jerry took it in a quick conventional handshake—but Lester had his thumb up, so I had to adjust for the Revolutionary Drug Brothers grip, or whatever that goddamn thing is supposed to mean. When you move across the country these days you have to learn about 19 different handshakes between Berkeley and Boston.

"He's right," said Jerry. "Those bastards wouldn't even *be* there if they weren't rotten." He shook his head without looking at us, staring balefully across the parking lot. The grey light of dawn was getting brighter now; Thursday night was dying and the highway at the other end of the parking lot was humming with cars full of people going to work on Friday morning.

* * *

WELCOME TO WASHINGTON D.C. That's what the sign says. It's about 20 feet wide & 10 feet tall—a huge stone plaque lit up by spotlights at the head of Sixteenth St., just in from the Maryland line. The street is five lanes wide, with fat green trees on both sides and about 1300 out-of-phase stoplights between here and the White House.

It is not considered fashionable to live in "The District" itself unless you can find a place in Georgetown, an aged-brick townhouse with barred windows, for $700 or so a month. Georgetown is Washington's lame answer to Greenwich Village. But not really. It's more like the Old Town section of Chicago, where the leading citizens are half-bright Playboy editors, smoking tailor-made joints. The same people, in Georgetown, are trendy young lawyers, journalists and bureaucrats who frequent a handful of pine-paneled bars and "singles only" discotheques where drinks cost $1.75 and there's No Cover Charge for girls wearing hotpants.

I live on the "black side" of Rock Creek park, in what my journalistic friends call "a marginal neighborhood." Almost everybody else I know or have any professional contact with lives either in the green Virginia suburbs or over on the "white side" of the park, towards Chevy Chase and Bethesda, in Maryland.

The Underculture is scattered into various far-flung bastions, and the only thing even approximately a crossroads is the area around Dupont Circle, downtown. The only two people I know who live down there are Nicholas Von Hoffman, a columnist for the Washington Post, and Jim Flug, Teddy Kennedy's hyper-active Legislative Assistant. But Von Hoffman seems to have had a belly-ful of Washington and now talks about moving out to the Coast, to San Francisco . . . and Flug, like everybody else even vaguely connected with Kennedy, is gearing down for a very heavy year: like maybe twenty hours a day on the telephone, and the other four on planes.

McGovern & the Press Wizards

With December winding down there is a fast-swelling undercurrent of political angst in the air around Washington, a sense of almost boiling desperation about getting Nixon and his cronies out of power before they can finish the seizure that began about two years ago.

Jim Flug says he'd rather not talk about Kennedy running for president—at least not until he has to, and that time seems to be coming up fast. Teddy is apparently sincere about not planning to run, but it is hard for him or anyone else not to notice that almost everybody who "matters" in Washington is fascinated by the recent series of Gallup Polls showing Kennedy creeping ever closer to Nixon—almost even with him now, and this rising tide has cast a very long shadow on the other Democratic candidates.

There is a sense of muted desperation in Democratic ranks at the prospect of getting stuck—and beaten once again—with some tried and half-true hack like Humphrey, Jackson or Muskie . . . and George McGovern, the only candidate in either party worth voting for, is hung in a frustration limbo created mainly by the gross cynicism of the Washington Press Corps. "He'd be a fine President," they say, "but of course he can't possibly win."

Why not?

Well . . . the wizards haven't bothered to explain that, but their reasoning appears to be rooted in the hazy idea that the people who could make McGovern President—that huge & confused coalition of students, freaks, blacks, anti-war activists & dazed dropouts—won't even bother to register, much less drag themselves to the polls on election day.

Maybe so . . . but it is hard to recall many candidates, in recent history, who failed to move what is now called "The McGovern Vote" to the polls if they *actually represented it.*

It sure as hell wasn't the AFL/CIO that ran LBJ out of the White House in 1968; and it wasn't Gene McCarthy either. It was the people who *voted* for McCarthy in New Hampshire that beat Johnson . . . and it wasn't George Meany who got shot with Bobby Kennedy in Los Angeles; it was a renegade "radical" organizer from the UAW.

It wasn't the big-time "Democratic bosses" who won the California primary for Bobby — but thousands of Niggers and Spics and white Peace Freaks who were tired of being gassed for not agreeing with The Man in the White House. Nobody had to drag them to the polls in California, and nobody would have had to drag them to the polls in November to beat Nixon.

But there was, of course, The Murder —and then the Convention in Chicago, and finally a turnip called Humphrey. He appealed to "respectable" Democrats then and now—and if Humphrey or any of his greasy ilk runs in '72, it will be another debacle like the Eisenhower-Stevenson wipeout in 1956.

The people who turned out for Bobby are still around—along with several million others who'll be voting for the first time—but they won't turn out for Humphrey, or Jackson, or Muskie, or any other neo-Nixon hack. They will not even come out for McGovern if the national press wizards keep calling him a Noble Loser . . .

According to the Gallup Polls, however, the underculture vote is holding up a fearful head of steam behind Ted Kennedy; and this drift has begun to cause genuine alarm among Big Wigs and "pros" in both parties. The mere mention of Kennedy's name is said to give Nixon bad cramps all over his body, such as it is. His thugs are already starting to lash Kennedy with vicious denounciations —calling him a "liar" and a "coward" and a "cheater."

And this is only December of 1971; the election is still ten months away.

The only person more nervous than Nixon about Kennedy's recent surge in the polls seems to be Kennedy himself. He won't even admit that it's happening —at least not for the record—and his top-level staffers, like Jim Flug, find themselves walking a public tightrope. They can see the thing coming—too soon, perhaps, but there's nothing they can do about that either. With the boss hunkered down, insisting he's not a candidate, his lieutenants try to keep their minds off the storm by working feverishly on Projects.

When I called Flug the other night, at the office, he was working late on a doomed effort to prevent Earl Butz from being confirmed, by the Senate, as Nixon's new Secretary of Agriculture.

"To hell with Butz," I said, "what about Rehnquist? Are they actually going to put a swine like that on the Supreme Court?"

"They have the votes," he replied.

"Jesus," I muttered, "is he as bad as all the rotten stuff I've read about him?"

"Worse," Flug said. "But I think he's in. We tried, but we can't get the votes."

Your New Supreme Court

Jim Flug and I are not close friends in any long-standing personal sense. I met him a few years ago when I went to Washington to do a lot of complicated research for an article about Gun Control Laws for Esquire—an article that finally died in a blaze of niggling, between me and the editors about how to cut my "final version" down from 30,000 words to a size that would fit in the magazine.

Flug had gone far out of his way to help me with that research. We talked in the dreary cafeteria in the Old Senate Office Building where we sat down elbow to elbow with Senator Roman Hruska, the statesman from Nebraska, and various other heavies who's names I forget now.

We idled through the line with our trays then took our plastic-wrapped tuna fish sandwiches over to a small formica table, along with coffee in styrofoam cups. Flug talked about the problems he was having with the Gun Control Bill—trying to put it into some form that might possibly pass the Senate. I listened, glancing up now and then toward the food-bar, half expecting to see somebody like Robert Kennedy pushing his tray through the line . . . until I suddenly remembered that Robert Kennedy was dead.

Meanwhile, Flug was outlining every angle and aspect of the Gun Control argument with the buzz-saw precision of a trial lawyer. He was totally *into* it: crouched there in his seat, wearing a blue pin-striped suit with a vest and ox-blood cordovans—a swarthy, bright-eyed little man about 30 years old, mercilessly shredding every argument the National Rifle Association had ever mounted against federal gun laws. Later, when I learned he really was a lawyer, it occurred to me that I would never under any circumstances want to tangle with a person like Flug in a courtroom . . . and I was careful not to tell him, even

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in jest, about my .44 magnum fetish.

After lunch that day we went back to his office and he gave me an armload of fact sheets and statistics to back up his arguments. Then I left, feeling very much impressed with Flug's trip—and I was not surprised, a year later, when I heard that he had been the prime mover behind the seemingly impossible challenge to the Carswell Supreme Court nomination, one of the most impressive long shot political victories since McCarthy sent Lyndon back to the ranch.

Coming on the heels of Judge Haynesworth's rejection by the Senate, Carswell had seemed like a shoo-in . . . but a hard-core group of Senate staffers, led by Flug and Birch Bayh's assistants, had managed to dump Carswell, too.

Now, with Nixon trying to fill two *more* Court vacancies, Flug said there was not a chance in hell of beating either one of them.

"Not even Rehnquist?" I asked. "Christ that's like Lyndon Johnson trying to put Bobby Baker on the Court."

"I know," said Flug. "Next time you want to think about appealing a case to the US Supreme Court, just remember who'll be up there."

"You mean *down* there," I said. "Along with all the rest of us." I laughed. "Well, there's always smack. . . ."

Flug didn't laugh. He and a lot of others have worked too hard, for the past three years, to derail the kind of nightmare that the Nixon/Mitchell team is ready to ram down our throats. There is not much satisfaction in beating Haynesworth & Carswell, then having to swallow a third-rate yoyo like Powell and a vengeful geek like Rehnquist. What Nixon and Mitchell have done in three years—despite the best efforts of the sharpest and meanest young turks the Democratic opposition can call on—is reduce the US Supreme Court to the level of a piss-poor bowling team in Memphis—and this disastrous, nazi-bent shift of the federal government's Final Decision-making powers won't even *begin* to take effect until the spring of '72.

The effects of this takeover are potentially so disastrous—in terms of personal freedom and police power—that there is no point even speculating on the fate of some poor, misguided geek who might want to take his "Illegal Search & Seizure" case all the way up to the top. A helpful hint, however, might be found in the case of the Tallahassee newspaper reporter who went to Canada in 1967 to avoid the draft—and returned to find that he was no longer a citizen of the United States and he now has 90 days to leave the country. He appealed his case to the Supreme Court, but they refused to even hear it.

So now he has to go, but of course he has no passport— and international travel is not real easy without a passport. The federal immigration officials understand this, but—backed up by the Supreme Court—they have given him an ultimatum to vacate, anyway. They don't care where he goes; just get out—and meanwhile Chief Justice Burger has taken to answering his doorbell at night with a big six-shooter in his hand. You never know, he says, who might come crashing in.

Indeed. Maybe Rehnquist—far gone with an overdose of raw sowbelly and crazy for terminal vengeance on the first house he comes to.

More Bad Tendencies

This world is full of dangerous beasts —but none quite as ugly and uncontrolable as a lawyer who has finally flipped off the tracks of Reason. He will run completely amok—like a Priest into sex, or a narc-squad cop who suddenly decides to start sampling his contraband.

Yes . . . and . . . ah, where were we? I have a bad tendency to rush off on mad tangents and pursue them for 50 or 60 pages that get so out of control that I end up burning them, for my own good. One of the few exceptions to this rule occurred very recently, when I slipped up and let about 200 pages go into print . . . which caused me a lot of trouble with the tax man, among others, and it taught me a lesson I hope I'll never forget.

Live steady. Don't fuck around. Give anything weird a wide berth—including people. It's not worth it. I learned this the hard way through brutal indulgence.

And it's also a nasty fact that I have to catch a plane for Chicago in three hours—to attend some kind of national Emergency Conference on New Voters, which looks like the opening shot in this year's version of the McCarthy/Kennedy uprising in '68—and since the conference starts at six o'clock tonight, I must make that plane. . . . .

. . . . Back to Chicago; it's never dull out there. You never know exactly what kind of terrible shit is going to come down on you in that town, but you can always count on *something*. Every time I go to Chicago I come away with scars.

Cruisin' With Cheech & Chong

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